



BILLING CODE 6717-01-P

DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY
FEDERAL ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION

Northern Natural Gas Company

Docket No. CP12-469-000

NOTICE OF INTENT TO PREPARE AN
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FOR THE PROPOSED
A-LINE ABANDONMENT PROJECT
AND
REQUEST FOR COMMENTS ON ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

The staff of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC or Commission) will prepare an environmental assessment (EA) that will discuss the environmental impacts of the A-Line Abandonment Project (Project) which would include the abandonment of facilities by Northern Natural Gas Company (Northern) in Ochiltree, Hansford, Hutchinson, and Carson Counties, Texas; Beaver County, Oklahoma; and Kiowa and Clark Counties, Kansas. This EA will be used by the Commission in its decision-making process to determine whether the project is in the public convenience and necessity.

This notice announces the opening of the scoping process the Commission will use to gather input from the public and interested agencies on the project. Your input will help the Commission staff determine what issues need to be evaluated in the EA. Please note that the **scoping period will close on July 25, 2012**. Further details on how to submit written comments are provided in the Public Participation section of this notice.

This notice is being sent to the Commission's current environmental mailing list for this project. State and local government representatives are asked to notify their constituents of this planned project and encourage them to comment on their areas of concern.

Summary of the Proposed Project

Northern proposes to abandon in by sale to DKM Enterprises, LLC (DKM) for salvage about 126 miles of its A-line consisting of two segments of 24-inch-diameter pipeline. One segment (the Skellytown to Spearman A-line) is about 38 miles long and extends from Northern's abandoned Skellytown Station near Skellytown, Carson County, Texas, to Northern's Spearman Compressor Station in Spearman, Ochiltree County, Texas. The second segment (the Beaver to Mullinville A-line) is about 88 miles long and

extends from Northern's Beaver Compressor Station near Beaver, Oklahoma, to its Mullinville Compressor Station near Mullinville, Kansas. Activities Northern would conduct related to the abandonment would include disconnecting the abandoned A-line from its other facilities that would be retained by cutting and capping the pipeline at valve settings or compressor stations at eight locations. After abandonment of the subject A-line by sale to DKM, DKM would salvage the 126 miles of pipeline subject to the terms of its purchase and sales agreement with Northern and applicable regulations and permits.

The general locations of the project facilities are shown in the maps in Appendix 1.¹

Land Requirements for Construction

Northern proposes abandoning these facilities by sale to DKM and states that all of its abandonment and DKM's salvage activities would be conducted within Northern's existing right-of-way which Northern would retain. Therefore, there would be no new land use requirements.

The EA Process

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires the Commission to take into account the environmental impacts that could result from an action whenever it considers the issuance of a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity. NEPA also requires us² to discover and address concerns the public may have about proposals. This process is referred to as "scoping". The main goal of the scoping process is to focus the analysis in the EA on the important environmental issues. By this notice, the Commission requests public comments on the scope of the issues to address in the EA. All comments received will be considered during the preparation of the EA.

In the EA we will discuss impacts that could occur as a result of the proposed abandonment project under these general headings:

¹ The appendices referenced in this notice are not being printed in the Federal Register. Copies of appendices were sent to all those receiving this notice in the mail and are available at www.ferc.gov using the link called "eLibrary" or from the Commission's Public Reference Room, 888 First Street, NE, Washington, DC 20426, or call (202) 502-8371. For instructions on connecting to eLibrary, refer to the last page of this notice.

²"We", "us", and "our" refer to the environmental staff of the Commission's Office of Energy Projects.

- land use;
- water resources, fisheries, and wetlands;
- cultural resources;
- vegetation and wildlife;
- endangered and threatened species;
- public safety; and
- cumulative impact.

We will also evaluate reasonable alternatives to the proposed project or portions of the project, and make recommendations on how to lessen or avoid impacts on the various resource areas.

The EA will present our independent analysis of the issues. The EA will be available in the public record through the Commission's eLibrary. Depending on the comments received during the scoping process, we may also publish and distribute the EA to the public for an allotted comment period. We will consider all comments on the EA before we make our recommendations to the Commission. To ensure we have the opportunity to consider and address your comments, please carefully follow the instructions in the Public Participation section beginning on page 4.

With this notice, we are asking agencies with jurisdiction by law and/or special expertise with respect to the environmental issues related to this project to formally cooperate with us in the preparation of the EA.³ Agencies that would like to request cooperating agency status should follow the instructions for filing comments provided under the Public Participation section of this notice.

Consultations Under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act

In accordance with the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation's implementing regulations, we are using this notice to solicit the views of the public on the project's potential effects on historic properties.⁴ We will document our findings on the impacts

³ The Council on Environmental Quality regulations addressing cooperating agency responsibilities are found at title 40 of the Code of Federal Regulations, part 1501.6.

⁴ The Advisory Council on Historic Preservation's regulations are at Title 36, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 800. Historic properties are defined in those regulations as any prehistoric or historic district, site, building, structure, or object included in or eligible for inclusion in the National Register for Historic Places.

on cultural resources and summarize the status of consultations under section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act in our EA.

Public Participation

You can make a difference by providing us with your specific comments or concerns about the project. Your comments should focus on the potential environmental effects, reasonable alternatives, and measures to avoid or lessen environmental impacts. The more specific your comments, the more useful they will be. To ensure that your comments are timely and properly recorded, please send your comments so that the Commission receives them in Washington, DC, on or before July 25, 2012.

For your convenience, there are three methods which you can use to submit your comments to the Commission. In all instances please reference the project docket number (CP12-469-000) with your submission. The Commission encourages electronic filing of comments and has expert eFiling staff available to assist you at (202) 502-8258 or efiling@ferc.gov.

- (1) You can file your comments electronically using the [eComment](#) feature located on the Commission's website (www.ferc.gov) under the link to [Documents and Filings](#). This is an easy method for interested persons to submit brief, text-only comments on a project;
- (2) You can file your comments electronically using the [eFiling](#) feature located on the Commission's website (www.ferc.gov) under the link to [Documents and Filings](#). With eFiling, you can provide comments in a variety of formats by attaching them as a file with your submission. New eFiling users must first create an account by clicking on "[eRegister](#)." You must select the type of filing you are making. If you are filing a comment on a particular project, please select "Comment on a Filing"; or
- (3) You may file a paper copy of your comments at the following address:

Kimberly D. Bose, Secretary
Federal Energy Regulatory Commission
888 First Street, NE, Room 1A
Washington, DC 20426

Environmental Mailing List

The environmental mailing list includes federal, state, and local government representatives and agencies; elected officials; environmental and public interest groups;

Native American Tribes; other interested parties; and local libraries and newspapers. This list also includes all affected landowners (as defined in the Commission's regulations) who are potential right-of-way grantors, whose property may be used temporarily for project purposes, or who own homes within certain distances of aboveground facilities, and anyone who submits comments on the project. We will update the environmental mailing list as the analysis proceeds to ensure that we send the information related to this environmental review to all individuals, organizations, and government entities interested in and/or potentially affected by the planned project. If we publish and distribute the EA, copies will be sent to the environmental mailing list for public review and comment. If you wish to receive no further mailings concerning environmental review of Northern's A-Line Abandonment Project, please use the return mailer attached as appendix 2 to notify us and you will be deleted from the environmental mailing list.

Becoming an Intervenor

In addition to involvement in the EA scoping process, you may want to become an "intervenor" which is an official party to the Commission's proceeding. Intervenors play a more formal role in the process and are able to file briefs, appear at hearings, and be heard by the courts if they choose to appeal the Commission's final ruling. An intervenor formally participates in the proceeding by filing a request to intervene. Instructions for becoming an intervenor are included in the User's Guide under the "e-filing" link on the Commission's website.

Additional Information

Additional information about the project is available from the Commission's Office of External Affairs, at (866) 208-FERC, or on the FERC website (www.ferc.gov) using the eLibrary link. Click on the eLibrary link, click on "General Search" and enter the docket number, excluding the last three digits in the Docket Number field (i.e., CP12-469-000). Be sure you have selected an appropriate date range. For assistance, please contact FERC Online Support at FercOnlineSupport@ferc.gov or toll free at (866) 208-3676, or for TTY, contact (202) 502-8659. The eLibrary link also provides access to the texts of formal documents issued by the Commission, such as orders, notices, and rulemakings.

In addition, the Commission offers a free service called eSubscription which allows you to keep track of all formal issuances and submittals in specific dockets. This can reduce the amount of time you spend researching proceedings by automatically providing you with notification of these filings, document summaries, and direct links to the documents. Go to www.ferc.gov/esubscribenow.htm.

Finally, public meetings or site visits will be posted on the Commission's calendar located at www.ferc.gov/EventCalendar/EventsList.aspx along with other related information.

Dated: June 25, 2012

Kimberly D. Bose,
Secretary.

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